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United States of America

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

GUY STOWERS,

Defendant.

CASE NO. 1:22-CR-00231 ADA-BAM

STIPULATION VACATING STATUS
CONFERENCE, SETTING CHANGE OF PLEA
HEARING, AND REGARDING EXCLUDABLE
TIME PERIODS UNDER SPEEDY TRIAL ACT;
[PROPOSED] FINDINGS AND ORDER

DATE: April 12, 2023
TIME: 1:00 p.m.
COURT: Hon. Barbara A. McAuliffe

This case is set for a status conference on April 12, 2023 in front of the Honorable Barbara A. McAuliffe, U.S. Magistrate Court Judge. The parties stipulate and request to vacate the status conference and set a change of plea hearing for May 1, 2023 at 8:30 a.m. in front of the Honorable Ana de Alba.

On May 26, 2021, the Court issued General Order 631, which provided for a reopening of the courthouse in June 2021, recognized the continued public health emergency, continued to authorize video or teleconference court appearances in various cases, and noted the court's continued ability under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (the "Act") to continue trials and other matters, excluding time under the Act. On June 27, 2022, the Court issued General Order 652, which "authorized the use of videoconference and teleconference technology in certain criminal proceedings under the in the Eastern District of California." This and previous General Orders highlight

1 and were entered to address public health concerns related to COVID-19. Pursuant to F.R.Cr.P. 5.1(c)
 2 and (d), a preliminary hearing must be held “no later than 14 days after initial appearance if the
 3 defendant is in custody,” unless the defendant consents and there is a “showing of good cause”, or if the
 4 defendant does not consent and there is a “showing that extraordinary circumstances exist and justice
 5 requires the delay.” Here, the defendant consents and there is good cause.

6 Although the General Orders address the district-wide health concern, the Supreme Court has
 7 emphasized that the Speedy Trial Act’s end-of-justice provision “counteract[s] substantive
 8 openendedness with procedural strictness,” “demand[ing] on-the-record findings” in a particular case.
 9 *Zedner v. United States*, 547 U.S. 489, 509 (2006). “[W]ithout on-the-record findings, there can be no
 10 exclusion under” § 3161(h)(7)(A). *Id.* at 507. Moreover, any such failure cannot be harmless. *Id.* at
 11 509; *see also United States v. Ramirez-Cortez*, 213 F.3d 1149, 1153 (9th Cir. 2000) (explaining that a
 12 judge ordering an ends-of-justice continuance must set forth explicit findings on the record “either orally
 13 or in writing”).

14 Based on the plain text of the Speedy Trial Act—which *Zedner* emphasizes as both mandatory
 15 and inexcusable—General Orders 611, 612, 617, 631, 652, and 662 require specific supplementation.
 16 Ends-of-justice continuances are excludable only if “the judge granted such continuance on the basis of
 17 his findings that the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best interest of the public
 18 and the defendant in a speedy trial.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A). Moreover, no such period is excludable
 19 unless “the court sets forth, in the record of the case, either orally or in writing, its reason or finding that
 20 the ends of justice served by the granting of such continuance outweigh the best interests of the public
 21 and the defendant in a speedy trial.” *Id.*

22 The General Orders exclude delay in the “ends of justice.” 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code
 23 T4). Although the Speedy Trial Act does not directly address continuances stemming from pandemics,
 24 natural disasters, or other emergencies, this Court has discretion to order a continuance in such
 25 circumstances. For example, the Ninth Circuit affirmed a two-week ends-of-justice continuance
 26 following Mt. St. Helens’ eruption. *Furlow v. United States*, 644 F.2d 764 (9th Cir. 1981). The court
 27 recognized that the eruption made it impossible for the trial to proceed. *Id.* at 767-68; *see also United*
 28 *States v. Correa*, 182 F. Supp. 326, 329 (S.D.N.Y. 2001) (citing *Furlow* to exclude time following the

September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the resultant public emergency). The coronavirus is posing a similar, albeit more enduring, barrier to the prompt proceedings mandated by the statutory rules.

In light of the societal context created by the foregoing, this Court should consider the following case-specific facts in finding excludable delay appropriate in this particular case under the ends-of-justice exception, § 3161(h)(7) (Local Code T4).¹ If continued, this Court should designate a new date for the status conference. *United States v. Lewis*, 611 F.3d 1172, 1176 (9th Cir. 2010) (noting any pretrial continuance must be “specifically limited in time”).

STIPULATION

Plaintiff United States of America, by and through its counsel of record, and defendant, by and through defendant’s counsel of record, hereby stipulate as follows:

1. The parties have reached a plea agreement. Defense requested one modification to the agreement the government provided. The government agreed, and will be sending the modified agreement on 4/10/23. Defense needs time to obtain defendant’s signature on the revised agreement. The next date on which Judge de Alba hears pleas is April 17, 2023. Based on her schedule, and the need to meet with her client and insure he has no further questions or concerns that would require additional investigation/ discussions with the government, defense counsel requests the hearing be set for May 1, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.

2. By this stipulation, defendant now move to vacate the April 12, 2023 status conference, and set a change of plea hearing before Judge de Alba on May 1, 2023 at 8:30 a.m., and to exclude time from April 12, 2023 through May 1, 2023 under Local Code T4.

3. The parties agree and stipulate, and request that the Court find the following:

a) The government has represented that the discovery associated with this case includes investigative reports, videos, photos, and related documents in electronic form. All of this discovery has been either produced directly to counsel and/or made available for inspection and copying.

b) The government does not object to vacating the status conference and setting a

¹ The parties note that General Order 612 acknowledges that a district judge may make “additional findings to support the exclusion” at the judge’s discretion. General Order 612, ¶ 5 (E.D. Cal. March 18, 2020).

1 change of plea hearing..

2 c) In addition to the public health concerns cited by the General Orders and
3 declarations of judicial emergency, and presented by the evolving COVID-19 pandemic, an
4 ends-of-justice delay is particularly apt in this case because:

- 5 • Defendant's ability to prepare for trial or a plea has been inhibited by the public
6 health emergency;
- 7 • Defendant needs additional time to finalize execution of the plea agreement as
8 noted above.

9
10 d) Based on the above-stated findings, the ends of justice served by continuing the
11 case as requested outweigh the interest of the public and the defendant in a trial within the
12 original date prescribed by the Speedy Trial Act.

13 e) For the purpose of computing time under the Speedy Trial Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3161,
14 et seq., within which trial must commence, the time period of December 14, 2022 to , 2023,
15 inclusive, is deemed excludable pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), B(iv) [Local Code T4]
16 because it results from a continuance granted by the Court at defendant's request on the basis of
17 the Court's finding that the ends of justice served by taking such action outweigh the best interest
18 of the public and the defendant in a speedy trial.

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20 **[Remainder of page intentionally left blank.]**
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4. Nothing in this stipulation and order shall preclude a finding that other provisions of the Speedy Trial Act dictate that additional time periods are excludable from the period within which a trial must commence.

IT IS SO STIPULATED.

Dated: April 10, 2023

PHILLIP A. TALBERT
United States Attorney

/s/ KIMBERLY A. SANCHEZ
KIMBERLY A. SANCHEZ
Assistant United States Attorney

Dated: April 10, 2022

/s/ MAI SHAWWA
Attorney for Defendant

ORDER

IT IS SO ORDERED that the status conference set for April 12, 2023, is vacated. A change of plea hearing is set for **May 1, 2023, at 8:30 a.m. before District Judge Ana de Alba**. Time is excluded pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h)(7)(A), B(iv).

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: April 10, 2023

/s/ Barbara A. McAuliffe
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE